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THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

Vol. XXXVII—No. 11 **September, 1949**

LET us resolve one great thing: resolve to know; resolve to think right, and do right; resolve to acquire some of the knowledge that always has existed—the knowledge of man as a spiritual being through all his fluctuations in the realm of matter. As we rely more and more upon the Self within, we begin to express and use the power which we already have—and that is far more than we imagine. We have to help ourselves by taking the suggestions already given in the teachings of Theosophy. And then, as the sustaining power of the will is held along the line in which we desire to do, more direct help comes from those Elder Brothers, who at every hour of each day "are willing and anxious to meet those clear-eyed enough to see their true destiny and noble-hearted enough to work for 'the great orphan, Humanity'." —R.C.

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(b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and

(c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

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A U M

The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour.
—*The Voice of the Silence*

THEOSOPHY

Vol. XXXVII **September, 1949** **No. 11**

OBJECT LESSONS

IT is sometimes forgotten that the problems and difficulties and emergencies of theosophical work were the same, fifty or seventy years ago, as they are now; and that now, as then, they are to be encountered as so many object lessons in practical philosophy. Neither H. P. Blavatsky nor Wm. Q. Judge were under any illusions that Theosophy could be studied in "peace and quiet," among the austere comforts of an ivory tower far removed from the rigors of everyday life. Theosophy, they knew, is a way of life that may be radically disturbing to the individual himself, for no sooner is one idea grasped and habits of thought and action altered to express a deeper conviction, than another principle begins to take root and grow in the waking consciousness, bringing a train of applications and ramifications to change daily life anew.

In recording the theosophical philosophy, therefore, both Mme. Blavatsky and Mr. Judge seem to have had two different considerations in mind—first, the perplexities of students over the doctrines themselves and, second, individual differences of opinion. The first difficulty interferes with the student's own progress in understanding theosophical ideas, while the second may undermine any cooperative efforts to promulgate the ideas to others, and thus the two problems are not totally separated. Since the aim of the Theosophical Movement is to reach as many minds as possible with a restatement of age-old principles and conceptions, those entrusted with the task of giving the philosophy a written form could not concentrate on persuading a few individuals of the potentialities of

a study of Theosophy. As a merely personal enterprise, the study of Theosophy has, in fact, very few potentialities. Only as a means of extending brotherhood among human beings, as a way of life that will enable the common man to broaden and deepen his service to his fellows, does Theosophy offer a unique opportunity to its students. To leave any sincere theosophist with "doctrines" alone would have been to defeat the purposes of the Movement.

Mme. Blavatsky and Mr. Judge may be said to have recorded Theosophy in two ciphers, one mental, the other moral—one in the form of ideas and concepts, the other as principles of spiritual action. From the standpoint of accurate metaphysical thought, it is important, for example, that the earth chain of globes should not be confused with the visible planets, and A. P. Sinnett's misinterpretation of the Adept teachings on this point drew extensive comment and refutation on several different occasions. But one who reads the material H. P. Blavatsky provides on this subject in *The Secret Doctrine* can find there much more than the correction of an erroneously stated tenet. And Mr. Sinnett's presumption in claiming personal revelations of Theosophy (though it brought his own philosophical education to an untimely end) served as an object lesson of the greatest value for theosophists at large.

The pursuit of truth without the relinquishment of pride and prejudice has been warned against in every age. It is no distinction for a man to be thrown off his base by a reckless plunge into intellectual speculation, since the intellect by definition is "cold, heartless, selfish." The *light* of mind comes not from itself, but from soul and spirit, the true heart of man. The intellect alone will never develop universal consciousness; it creates, rather, a "private world," in which a man can be lost to the soul, dead to human brotherhood. Those who pursue self-centered philosophizing even a short way soon realize that they have entered upon a road leading to despair, for the human mind cannot exist, mole-like, in its own tunnels.

There is work for which thinking is the tool, and an end for which self-consciousness is the means, but the work and its goal involve a development of the *whole* man—of intuition more than brain rationalizing, of self-knowledge more than self-expression, of moral courage more than irresponsible bravado. Theosophy may not be safe for the intellectual dilettante, but it is safe *from* him:

he will be content with its fringes, or contemptuous of them, and in either case he will not be drawn to the essence, the central core of its teachings. On the other hand, the more the mind is engaged with the laws of man—of thought, action and knowledge—the more the occult powers of the human soul are sensed and awakened, the more impersonal becomes the mind's contemplation of ideas. Gradually, thinking is detached from the emotional nature, and the student is prepared to "accept truth wherever it may be found." This includes taking truth to oneself, for while prejudice prompts the individual to judge truth by his own views, philosophy impels a man to judge himself by truth. This judgment, self-recognized and self-imposed, is the strictest test of the will to know, for object lessons drawn from life are usually those to which the personal man *objects.* They make interesting reading when they belong to another's life, but self-knowledge consists in reading one's own.

When discrimination and self-application have been made the undeviating rule, the Ego has asserted its conscious and irrevocable choice of a higher life. Existence, from that point forward, will be pre-eminently on the planes of thought and feeling, with experience lived out interiorly, faced directly, and conquered by dint of self-reliance. Thus the ancient challenge is met: *to dare, to know, to will, and to be silent.* With determination set for knowledge, the eager mind allows no energy to escape in needless recrimination against outside agencies of his instruction. Whether difficulties arise through one's fellowmen or, as it may seem, from circumstances and "conditions," the student focusses on the lesson for the future inherent in the present, and perceives in his karma former lines of meditation that need re-direction. He is content with his fate, inasmuch as it affords him a liberal education in the use of the powers of thought, will, feeling, memory and imagination.

In everyday life, such a man is the *Bhagavad-Gita's* "stranger to anxiety, fear, and anger." In the Theosophical Movement he is as Wm. Q. Judge was to his teacher and colleague, H. P. Blavatsky. "Judge is a true friend," H.P.B. wrote; "he has worked and he has never given me any trouble by complaining or criticizing, and, he is silent."

The path to knowledge has never been without its hardships. The traveller encounters storms of opposition in his own nature,

as well as from others. He has to weather, in his turn, as have all others before him, the winter of disillusion and learn that truth has no seasons, nor any regard for persons. Since man is the microcosm of the macrocosm and since the laws of his little universe are also those of the greater world around him, it is to be expected that each time the axis of his life shifts closer to the true pole of spiritual aspiration, there will be earthquakes on the surface of his "globe"—upheavals of circumstance—as the outer life changes in conformity with his new center of gravity. But these disturbances, psychic and physical, need not interrupt the "fast-moving soul."

The "favored" soldiers come upon the field with an intuition that the goal—in view or only dimly sensed—is worthy of their greatest efforts. They are geared for the struggle ahead by a knowledge that Self is none of its passing phases, that the Spirit of man is never expressed in any of its vehicles, and that the soul divested of every lesser quality will but soar the higher in the real world of its abode. Moral courage sustains when the spur of pride is withdrawn, when the personal consciousness shrinks in the pitiless light of uncompromising Principle, when the mind seems unworthy of its own self-respect. That courage stems from past devotion to moral law, from willing acceptance of the "object lessons" of karma, and is the soul's memory that nothing truly precious was ever lost in the following of its innate intuitions.

THEOSOPHICAL INDISPENSABILITY

For the extension of the theosophical movement, a useful channel for the irrigation of the dry fields of contemporary thought with the water of life, Branches are needed everywhere; not mere groups of passive sympathisers. . . . Active, wide-awake, earnest, unselfish Branches are needed, whose members shall not be constantly unmasking their selfishness by asking "What will it profit us to join the Theosophical Society, and how much will it harm us?" but be putting to themselves the question "Can we not do substantial good to mankind by working in this good cause with all our hearts, our minds, and our strength?" . . . The Society can get on without them, but they cannot afford to let it do so. —H.P.B.

TO THE READERS OF "LUCIFER"

THE opening editorial of H. P. Blavatsky's magazine *Lucifer* (see August THEOSOPHY) was the battle-cry of "the fighting, combative *Manas.*" Subsequent issues of *Lucifer* kept up a steady fire with "The Signs of the Times," "Origin of Evil," "Let Every Man Prove His Own Work," "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels," "From the Notebook of an Unpopular Philosopher," and "*Lucifer* to the Archbishop of Canterbury" (reprinted respectively in THEOSOPHY I, 323; II, 506; XXX, 2; IV, 32, 62, 134; XXXI, 485; and I, 131). These articles challenged the spiritualists: "the time for phenomena with, or through mediums, whether professional or otherwise, is gone by"; examined philosophically the pessimism of the times (remarkably like the twentieth-century variety); discussed the psychology of social reform and its limitations; repudiated exoteric and dogmatic Christianity as contrary to the spirit of the Gospels themselves; held up to ridicule the social hypocrisies "accepted" in the best circles; and finally, in an open letter to the Lord Primate of all England, asked the official state church to answer for the conditions under which the citizens of a joint "spiritual" and temporal government were forced to live.

Gerald Massey, reviewing a book on blood-covenanting, evidently offended some readers (as intimated by H.P.B. in the present reprint). But the key to Massey's dead-letter materialism had been suggested in two Editor's notes attached to the article, the first stating that " 'Blood' is the *principle* of the Body," and that Atma is "the light and life in man, as the physical sun is the light and life of our solar system." In the second note, H.P.B. takes exception to the conclusions of "strict scholarship," and remarks: "The arcane doctrine teaches that the 'blood' rites are as old as the Third Root-race, being established in their final form by the Fourth Parent race in commemoration of the separation of androgynous mankind, their forefathers, into males and females."

Another study of Tolstoi's philosophy appeared, "The Science of Life" (see THEOSOPHY XXXII, 245), and the December, 1887, issue contained several correlations between theosophical ideas and dominant "philosophies" in Western Culture: "Emerson and Occultism," "Theosophy and Socialism," and "An Infant Genius" (on Josef Hofmann, ten-year-old musical prodigy). "The Spirit of Healing"

observed that the power to heal body or soul cannot be "sold for money or bartered for wealth or fame," and commended the practice of Count Mattei, a homeopathic pioneer.

The cumulative effect of these articles, which—together with mystic or occult tales and simpler statements of theosophical ideas—appeared in the short space of four months, can only be imagined. Inevitably, the stirring of ideas provoked bitterness as well as gratitude, and soon there began to be heard the "mighty roaring voice of denunciation, so welcome to those whose little spites and hates and mental stagnation in the grasp of the social respectability it panders to." The first issue's statement of policy was therefore supplemented, five months later (January, 1888), by a lead article addressed "To the Readers of 'Lucifer'," which is here reprinted for the first time.—Editors THEOSOPHY.

OUR magazine is only four numbers old, and already its young life is full of cares and trouble. This is all as it should be; *i.e.,* like every other publication, it must fail to satisfy *all* its readers, and this is only in the nature of things and the destiny of every printed organ. But what seems a little strange in a country of culture and freethought is that *Lucifer* should receive such a number of *anonymous,* spiteful, and often abusive letters. This, of course, is but a casual remark, the waste-basket in the office being the only addressee and sufferer in this case; yet it suggests strange truths with regard to human nature.*

Sincerity is true wisdom, it appears, only to the mind of the moral philosopher. It is rudeness and insult to him who regards dissimulation and deceit as culture and politeness, and holds that the shortest, easiest, and safest way to success is to let sleeping dogs and old customs alone. But, if the dogs are obstructing the highway to progress and truth, and Society will, as a rule, reject the wise words of (St.) Augustine, who recommends that "no man should prefer custom before reason and truth," is it a sufficient

*"VERBUM SAP." It is not our intention to notice anonymous communications, even though they should emanate in a round-about way from Lambeth Palace. The matter *"Verbum Sap"* refers to is not one of taste; the facts must be held responsible for the offence; and, as the Scripture hath it, "Woe to them by whom the offence cometh!"

cause for the philanthropist to walk out of, or even deviate from, the track of truth, because the selfish egoist chooses to do so? Very true, as remarked somewhere by Sir Thomas Browne, that not every man is a proper champion for the truth, nor fit to take up the gauntlet in its cause. Too many of such defenders are apt, from inconsideration and too much zeal, to charge the troops of error so rashly that they "remain themselves as trophies to the enemies of truth." Nor ought all of us (members of the Theosophical Society) to do so personally, but rather leave it only to those among our numbers who have voluntarily and beforehand sacrificed their personalities for the cause of Truth. Thus teaches us one of the Masters of Wisdom in some fragments of advice which are published further on for the benefit of the Theosophists (see the article that follows this*). While enforcing upon such public characters in our ranks as editors, and lecturers, etc., the duty of telling fearlessly "the Truth to the face of LIE," he yet condemns the habit of private judgment and criticism in every individual Theosophist.

Unfortunately, these are not the ways of the public and readers. Since our journal is entirely unsectarian, since it is neither theistic nor atheistic, Pagan nor Christian, orthodox nor heterodox, therefore, its editors discover eternal verities in the most opposite religious systems and modes of thought. Thus *Lucifer* fails to give full satisfaction to either infidel or christian. In sight of the former—whether he be an Agnostic, a Secularist, or an Idealist—to find divine or occult lore underlying "the rubbish" in the Jewish Bible and Christian Gospels is sickening; in the opinion of the latter, to recognise the same truth as in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures in the Hindu, Parsi, Buddhist, or Egyptian religious literature, is vexation of spirit and blasphemy. Hence, fierce criticism from both sides, sneers and abuse. Each party would have us on its own sectarian side, recognising as truth, only that which its particular *ism* does.

But this cannot nor shall it be. Our motto was from the first, and ever shall be: "THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN—TRUTH." Truth we search for, and, once found, we bring it forward before the world, whencesoever it comes. A large majority of our readers is fully satisfied with this our policy, and that is plainly sufficient for our purposes.

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*"Some Words on Daily Life" (reprinted in THEOSOPHY XXXIII, 177).—Eds.

It is evident that when toleration is not the outcome of indifference it must arise from wide-spreading charity and large-minded sympathy. Intolerance is pre-eminently the consequence of ignorance and jealousy. He who fondly believes that he has got the great ocean in his family water-jug is naturally intolerant of his neighbour, who also is pleased to imagine that he has poured the broad expanses of the sea of truth into his own particular pitcher. But anyone who, like the Theosophists, knows how infinite is that ocean of eternal wisdom, to be fathomed by no one man, class, or party, and realizes how little the largest vessel made by man contains in comparison to what lies dormant and still unperceived in its dark, bottomless depths, cannot help but be tolerant. For he sees that others have filled their little water-jugs at the same great reservoir in which he has dipped his own, and if the water in the various pitchers seems different to the eye, it can only be because it is discoloured by impurities that were in the vessel before the pure crystalline element—a portion of the one eternal and immutable truth—entered into it.

There is, and can be, but one absolute truth in Kosmos. And little as we, with our present limitations, can understand it in its essence, we still know that if it is absolute it must also be omnipresent and universal; and that in such case, it must be underlying every world-religion—the product of the thought and knowledge of numberless generations of thinking men. Therefore, that a portion of truth, great or small, is found in every religious and philosophical system, and that if we would find it, we have to search for it at the origin and source of every such system, at its roots and first growth, not in its later overgrowth of sects and dogmatism. Our object is not to destroy any religion but rather to help to filter each, thus ridding them of their respective impurities. In this we are opposed by all those who maintain, against evidence, that their particular pitcher alone contains the whole ocean. How is our great work to be done if we are to be impeded and harassed on every side by partisans and zealots? It would be already half accomplished were the intelligent men, at least, of every sect and system, to feel and to confess that the little wee bit of truth they themselves own must necessarily be mingled with error, and that their neighbours' mistakes are, like their own, mixed with truth.

Free discussion, temperate, candid, undefiled by personalities and

animosity, is, we think, the most efficacious means of getting rid of error and bringing out the underlying truth; and this applies to publications as well as to persons. It is open to a magazine to be tolerant or intolerant; it is open to it to err in almost every way in which an individual can err; and since every publication of the kind has a responsibility such as falls to the lot of few individuals, it behooves it to be ever on its guard, so that it may advance without fear and without reproach. All this is true in a special degree in the case of a theosophical publication, and *Lucifer* feels that it would be unworthy of that designation were it not true to the profession of the broadest tolerance and catholicity, even while pointing out to its brothers and neighbours the errors which they indulge in and follow. While thus keeping strictly, in its editorials, and in articles by its individual editors, to the spirit and teachings of pure theosophy, it nevertheless frequently gives room to articles and letters which diverge widely from the esoteric teachings accepted by the editors, as also by the majority of theosophists. Readers, therefore, who are accustomed to find in magazines and party publications only such opinions and arguments as the editor believes to be unmistakably orthodox—from his peculiar standpoint—must not condemn any article in *Lucifer* with which they are not entirely in accord, or in which expressions are used that may be offensive from a sectarian or a *prudish* point of view, on the ground that such are unfitted for a theosophical magazine. They should remember that precisely because *Lucifer* is a theosophical magazine, it opens its columns to writers whose views of life and things may not only slightly differ from its own, but even be diametrically opposed to the opinion of the editors. The object of the latter is to elicit truth, not to advance the interest of any particular *ism,* or to pander to any hobbies, likes or dislikes, of any class of readers. It is only snobs and prigs who, disregarding the truth or error of the idea, cavil and strain merely over the expressions and words it is couched in.

Theosophy, if meaning anything, means truth; and truth has to deal indiscriminately and in the same spirit of impartiality with vessels of honour and of dishonour alike. No theosophical publication would ever dream of adopting the coarse—or shall we say terribly sincere—language of a Hosea or a Jeremiah; yet so long as those holy prophets are found in the Christian Bible, and the Bible is in

every respectable, pious family, whether aristocratic or plebeian; and so long as the Bible is read with bowed head and in all reverence by young, innocent maidens and school-boys, why should our Christian critics fall foul of any phrase which may have to be used —if truth be spoken at all—in an occasional article upon a scientific subject? It is to be feared that the same sentences now found objectionable, because referring to Biblical subjects, would be loudly praised and applauded had they been directed against any gentile system of faith *(Vide certain missionary organs).* A little charity, gentle readers—charity, and above all—*fairness* and JUSTICE.

Justice demands that when the reader comes across an article in this magazine which does not immediately approve itself to his mind by chiming in with his own peculiar ideas, he should regard it as a problem to solve rather than as a mere subject of criticism. Let him endeavour to learn the lesson which only opinions differing from his own can teach him. *Let him be tolerant, if not actually charitable,* and postpone his judgment till he extracts from the article the truth it must contain, adding this new acquisition to his store. One ever learns more from one's enemies than from one's friends; and it is only when the reader has credited this hidden truth to *Lucifer,* that he can fairly presume to put what he believes to be the errors of the article he does not like to the debit account.

CHARITY

The one whom I condemn is my enemy—made by me. The one to whom I bear good-will is my friend—loved, or scorned, by him. I make my own world of brothers, nor does the hate, or malice, of some depopulate it. Only love is natural to the Soul of man; and hate is but insanity.

Fear is not natural to the Soul of man. He who is fearless does not hate. He who is desireless can not hate. He who has no possessions in any world can not envy others' possessions in this world.

I am not disturbed by the weaknesses of others—only by my own. I can not judge another's strength by my own frailties. I can not feel my conscience is always sure, and others', never. I can not pronounce the injustice of another, save I put myself, knowing all the facts and reasons, in his place. His motives are for the gods to know, and they will—soon or late—disclose them.

THE IRRATIONAL SOUL

FROM many points of view, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* constitute a history of what, through the ages, the irrational soul of man has done to the Wisdom-Religion. Man's appetitive and unruly nature is defined by H. P. Blavatsky with precision. The *corpus* of her teaching on the subject of *Kama-manas* and the dual aspects of the mind anticipated most of the pragmatic findings of modern psychology when these are disentangled from the obsessions of unadulterated psycho-physiological materialism. Equally, her historical sense was true in its fundamental objective of rescuing from oblivion the facts of the past. More than once she warned her readers that this era would be held responsible to Karma—

> for cunningly-made up History, for events purposely perverted, and for great characters slandered by posterity, mangled out of recognition between the two cars of Jagannatha—Bigotry and Materialism; one accepting too much, the other denying all.

To understand her purpose in this respect, it should be remembered that, for her, history was not merely a record of past events. What we usually think of as the past, in races and nations long forgotten, was re-lived (so to speak) in the consciousness of the recorder. The doctrine is metaphysical in essence. Even in contemporary thought, this subjective emphasis in study of the annals of the moving mind of man is not without support. In *The Idea of History,* the late Professor R. G. Collingwood wrote:

> For history is not contained in books and documents; it lives only as a present interest and pursuit in the mind of the historian when he criticizes and interprets those documents, and, by so doing, relives for himself the states of mind into which he inquires.

As an element in this process of research, we may ask ourselves what are some of the characteristics of irrational human nature which have played such havoc through the centuries, not only with the Sacred Science, but also with so many of the best-laid exoteric schemes for the ordering of the world. If it be true (as undoubtedly it is to the detached observer) that our store of scientific knowledge is still insufficient to forecast, with any mathematical certainty, the behaviour of material under all conditions, it is even more certain

that the uninitiated observer will never be able to prophesy accurately the conditioned or other responses to teaching of a spiritual order. "So long as science has anything to learn," we have been told, "and a shadow of religious dogmatism lingers in the hearts of the multitudes, the world's prejudices have to be conquered step by step, not at a rush." Conditions in the world favour the growth of the "dark Egotism, the progeny of *Mahat* on the lower plane." (*S.D.* I, 260.) Even the present-day psychologist has had ample opportunity of studying, on a large enough scale, the operation of "terrestrial, devilish wisdom" (psychic power, in the widest sense of the term), as described by St. James (iii, 13-17). He has witnessed two World Wars in a quarter of a century, and has seen the dire results, in human savagery and suffering, of a deliberate distortion of the past in the interest of greed and dreams of future power. Let us measure one or two features of the *kamic* nature in man, and observe something of its processes. We may glance, also, at the nature of that "great terrestrial crucible (the Astral Light), in which the vile emanations of the earth (moral and physical) . . . are all converted into their subtlest essence, and radiated back intensified, thus becoming epidemics—moral, psychic, and physical" *(Theos. Glossary).*

No one is unaware of the vagaries of that *personal* soul which H. P. Blavatsky described as a compound—"in its lower aspect, of animal desires and terrestrial passions imparted to it by its associations with its vehicle, the seat of all these" ("Occultism versus the Occult Arts"). It is so gratifying to imagine that we have left the animal behind us; but occasions arise when even the best of us realize sadly that we have merely developed a reason with which we serve and justify the appetitive nature. Of the majority of people it is probably true to say that their mental evolution (as that is ordinarily understood) is still incomplete, even for this comparatively early cycle of total evolution. There is little conscious scrutiny, and even less attempt at control, of instincts and emotions. These "just happen." To psychologists generally, there is nothing disturbing in the contemplation of "nature's" arrangements. Science is not for them what it was for Plato—a system of universal meanings. It was the heart of W. Trotter's classic work, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War,* that man could never hope to escape his biological fate as a social animal. Why, then, should we be surprised if he seeks to

lull, and not kill, those greedy passions whose hotbed is the instinctual soul? Anger, greed, delusion, envy, passion, vacillation, sloth, and unbelief (as to the possibility of attaining truth) are always with man, when his ears are deaf to the counsels of those who are at once his Teachers and Friends. And, after all, we can in an emergency repair to the psycho-analyst, and, with his aid, by a process of sublimation based upon empirical theory, hope "to turn thereby the muddy stream of the animal sewer into the crystalline waters of life"! This was H.P.B.'s graphic simile when illustrating the vain imaginings of occult students who had not grasped the necessity of removing the influence of the personal self, and of annihilating these tendencies "in the retort of an unflinching will." All this confusion of means and ends, so characteristic of modern psychological practice, might be avoided if the true nature of the irrational soul were more clearly perceived.

Plutarch is quoted in *Isis Unveiled* as saying that "Plato and Pythagoras distribute the soul into two parts, the rational *(noëtic),* and irrational *(agnoia);* that part of the soul of man which is rational is eternal . . . but that part of the soul which is divested of reason dies." It is this *agnoia* which H. P. Blavatsky called lower *manas,* and she defined it as "the ray which emanated from the Higher *Manas* or permanent Ego, and is that principle which forms the human mind." It is this mind, "the sole link and medium between the man of earth and the Higher Self," which is so subject to the turmoil of terrestrial desires, when not attuned "to the divine harmony of the highest Principle." In that psychical storm, the qualities of self-preservation, of acquisitiveness and pugnacity, assert their strength, and the human reasoning faculties used in their behalf, make the struggle a more bestial and ferocious one than is normally associated with purely animal passions. To call these tendencies "primitive"—in the sense, for instance, in which that word is used in studies of the operative causes of modern warfare—is to be guilty of viewing the progress of Man from a purely biological standpoint, with the substitution, for normal heredity, of a social mechanism for the transmission of civilization. There is always unconscious irony in the effort of psychiatrists to refer undesirable elements in human nature (the word "soul" is taboo) to "primitive" instincts. It smacks of visiting upon unknown ancestors the

vicious propensities of which modern man sometimes is ashamed. No hope of improvement is possible along these lines, for self-sacrifice also is considered frequently as an equally "primitive" tendency to injure oneself (masochism). In these circumstances, we are left to the obscurities of cultural values effecting collective and individual sublimation as the sole bases for the rightful direction of instinctive urges of the animal nature. If war and culture be incompatible, so also are peace and civilized assumptions, as these exist today. What is needed for both enduring values and the catharsis of our discontents is a restoration of the teachings on the subject of *Atma-Vidya,* "a term which is translated 'Knowledge of the Soul,' *true Wisdom* by the Orientalists, but which means far more."

None of our accepted authorities is able to tell us what are those factors in the Darwinian scheme of evolution, as applied to the human species, which could bring about the redirection, to higher social and cultural ends, of fundamental animal traits from the past. How, indeed, can these official exponents be expected to do so without the continuing validity of the cycle of the soul? The old "unconscious" urges still remain at their most primitive level, we are told. Unless it be seen that, within the periodical law of reincarnation, there is a metaphysical "atavism," quite distinct from, though related to, biological inheritance, there is really nothing left for us but to take refuge in sublimation as the resolvent of all our ills. The pedigree of man and his septenary nature, as taught by the Sages of old, turn the eyes to wider horizons than are dreamed of in the philosophies of our Darwinists.

To pursue salvation for the race in the clinic of the psychologist is to worship an illusion. It may, perhaps, be categorised with that unutterable desecration of human thought represented by Alfred Rosenberg's *der Mythus des Blutes* (in his *The Myth of the 20th Century*), where Nordic blood was believed to figure a mystery supplanting the old sacraments. In both cases we are in the presence of aberrations of the personal soul, deceived by that modern and anemic interpretation of the Astral Light which is known as "the Unconscious." Wrote Dr. William Brown (Wilde Reader in Mental Philosophy at Oxford University) in his *War and the Psychological Conditions of Peace* (1942): "But, of all lying, the most common is self-deception. It is the disguise which the unconscious assumes

when it makes itself felt through the conscious and perversely influences its activities." It is true that the Unconscious of modern psychology is protean in its effects, but study of its influence upon individual and collective human life has only touched the fringe of what is known in the Esoteric Philosophy of its true source, the Astral Light, permeating the elemental life of the vestures which clothe the lower phases of the human mind:

> . . . the Astral Light is simply the dregs of Akasha or the Universal Ideation in its metaphysical sense. Though invisible, it is yet, so to speak, the phosphorescent radiation of the latter, and is the medium between it and man's thought faculties. It is these which pollute the Astral Light and make it what it is—the storehouse of all human and especially psychic iniquities. *(Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge.)*

It is this imponderable "ether" which, obeying the laws of attraction and repulsion, reflects into the unconscious the evil or good pictures with which it is impressed. The dragon of irrational evil must be conquered by the spiritual sword of the sovereign will. Only thus will the Astral Light become what W. Q. Judge promised it would be in such circumstances—"our Divine Uplifter." Union with the Higher Self will take place when—

> the brilliant *Augoeides,* the divine SELF, can vibrate in conscious harmony with both the poles of the human Entity—the man of matter purified, and the ever pure Spiritual Soul—and stand in the presence of the MASTER SELF, the Christos of the mystic Gnostic, blended, merged into, and one with IT forever.

"A USEFUL FUNCTION"

There is also a useful function of the Astral light. As it preserves the pictures of all past events and things, and as there is nothing new under the sun, the appliances, the ideas, the philosophy, the arts and sciences of long buried civilizations are continually being projected in pictures out of the astral into the brains of living men. This gives a meaning not only to the oft-recurring "coincidence" of two or more inventors or scientists hitting upon the same ideas or inventions at about the same time and independently of each other, but also to other events and curious happenings. —W.Q.J.

HOW TO STUDY

THE study of Theosophy ought not to be a matter of luxury and convenience, but an uttermost necessity. Unless we feel that study is as necessary to our constitution as physical food is essential to the well-being of the body, we shall not go at the purpose of study with enthusiasm, zeal, persistence—a three-fold energy which carries with it success.

In the first place, then, to feel the absolute necessity for study; secondly, to have a clear idea as to what is to be gained by study. People often, especially in matters of philosophy or with Theosophy, are attracted to it because they want something to believe in. Fundamentally, this attitude goes counter to the whole viewpoint of Theosophy, which has nothing to offer us in the shape of belief. Theosophy has to be studied for the purpose of gaining knowledge which can ultimately be experienced. It is *knowledge* we need to seek, and we should therefore bring to its pursuit the attitude of the genuine inquirer and student who wants something more from his study than confirmation of what he himself has already preconceived.

Often, people take up a book and say, I want to read this so that I may prove that reincarnation is true; or, on the other hand, I shall read this book to find out that reincarnation is a false doctrine. Both these views are to be avoided. Let us not go to a book to see our own opinions expressed or our own dislikes articulated. If we want to find out about a particular book, a particular philosophy, a particular system of thought *as it is,* let us in studying it put our dislikes and our likes on the subject aside. Nor should an enquirer be afraid to approach a subject with frankness as well as reservation—a frankness to see and to "give the chance" to the author in order to get his viewpoint. Whether we shall agree or disagree with his viewpoint later on, is another matter. But let us also be reserved: let us not take the attitude of accepting or believing before a proposition has been understood; that is fatal. It is not a crime or a sin to come to a book in a questioning attitude, nor even with doubt, for if we are honest in our search for truth, as we question the author, we shall get back of sentences, which

may not be clear, to the author's mind. Constructive doubt is a potent tool, because it enables the student to fight for the emergence of truth as he understands it. Far better doubt than become, as Browning put it, "finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark."

Now there is a tendency in many Theosophical students to consider themselves finished exponents of the philosophy because they are able to repeat what they have read; yet, they have not thoroughly grasped the meaning of what they express. So, we need to ask ourselves, when we take up *The Ocean of Theosophy, The Secret Doctrine,* or *Isis Unveiled,* are we studying the language—the words—or, are we trying to grasp the ideas? If it is the ideas, then we need to pursue two distinct lines; first, to read carefully so that we are able to repeat the ideas, not in the language of the author, but in our own language, in so straightforward and simple a manner that an ordinary mind can understand what we have been saying. The faculty of clear explanation comes with understanding. Secondly, one cannot be said to have grasped a philosophical idea unless he has seen all that has been said against it. If one can answer to himself in his own thoughts all the objections that are or can possibly be raised against an idea, then it is clear the idea has been grasped. Supposing, by a process of reasoning, you come to accept the law of reincarnation, and then somebody puts to you certain views against the law which you are not able to counter? Your understanding is not complete; your grasp is not full.

Theosophical propositions are established propositions, and the evidences of Theosophy are implied in Theosophical teachings, which are composed of facts observed and experienced as first-hand realizations. Theosophical knowledge is not a matter of conjecture, nor of deduction and inference merely, as is the case with scientific knowledge, but being a matter of experience and realization, has completeness. In studying Theosophy, then, we ought to live and *practice* it so that any particular doctrine which we are studying may be illuminated and displayed through our understanding. Thus also we shall avoid repeating in verbal form without either intellectual recognition, or spiritual realization in some measure, whether small or great.

Theosophy as a system of thought is highly methodical both in fundamentals and principles, as in details. Often, one is tempted

to take up some interesting detail, and, not knowing the actual place and position of that detail in the larger scheme of things, not understand it; one detail, being misunderstood, all the details connected with it are misunderstood. What we need to do, therefore, is to get at the seed ideas. In *The Secret Doctrine,* in the *Key,* in the *Ocean*—in all the writings of true Theosophists, in fact—there are seed ideas, which we must learn to pick out and understand, seed ideas from which other ideas spring forth to take their proper place in the tree of knowledge.

Take the seed-ideas of any book and see if they are co-ordinated in a whole. Secondly, see if the plant that sprouts from the seed-idea is faithful to the type of seed. It is true, of course, that some plants grow straight and in a very regular way; others, large trees, not from the point of view of form so methodical, yet, as with the banyan-tree, show the completeness and harmony of their structure when fully studied.

The "Contents" of a book and the Index are often keys to the seed-ideas. In the old books, like the *Upanishads,* where "Contents" and Index are non-existent, one has to go through, perhaps in a peculiar kind of madness, till he finds for himself the method existing in them; but the seed-ideas are there. Our work, suited to present constitutions in this intellectual race, is simplified by the great teachers, because they have indicated the seed-ideas. The "Contents" of the *Ocean,* for instance, indicate something of the seed ideas; although not every line of the "Contents" makes a seed idea, such central points will be found in certain lines. The seed ideas may not be in the shape of one thought in a chapter; perhaps in one chapter you will find four, and in another chapter none, because the second chapter may be taking you around the unfoldment of those seed ideas in the previous one.

To get, therefore, at the IDEAS is our task; not the language, not the words, because by mere repetition of words we shall suffer as they have suffered in India, where they often thought that they understood the *Gita* and the *Upanishads* if they were able to repeat them. Eighteen or one hundred and eight repetitions of a particular verse will bring a particular virtue only by repeating it through the process of *Life!* Study classes or individual study will be fruitful and successful in proportion as that which has been grasped in the

shape of ideas is practiced in life. People often say that it is impossible to practice what they study, and it *is* impossible if the subject studied is ordinary science or ordinary philosophy, because they are incomplete as sciences. But it is a different matter when one is in contact with an established, verified and experienced system of thought. The value of Theosophy is that its truths are the result of firsthand knowledge and experience of individuals like ourselves, who have made the effort and have indicated how others can make a similar effort and can produce similar results. Hence, the importance of the effort to live it. In fact, if we cannot relate our intellectual study to our every day environment, to our own Karma, we can never be sure that we have understood it. The experiencing of an idea is the indicator of both intellectual recognition and spiritual realization, in some measure; and such is the objective of all study of Theosophy.

While the whole process is the same for both individual and collective study, there is an additional facility that comes to us in group study. It is a visible and well-known fact that, studying together, we have more minds and more people who go to various books and bring passages, views, ideas and thoughts on the subject under consideration, so that each idea gets all the enrichment about us. But there is further an invisible assistance that comes. One of the purposes of Theosophy is to influence and affect the collective mind of the race. On account of the condition inherent in evolution, mind wars against individual mind, and the warring minds of individuals belonging to a race hinder and hamper unfoldment along the spiritual lines of the mind of the race. So, when we take up Theosophy as a collective study in class or group, we are not combatting the warring element, but doing a real work in constructing, forging together, bringing into a harmonious whole, however small it may be, a part of that race-mind. We are trying to build up a mind composed of subtler matter than that used by the ordinary individual as he lives in the warring world of combatants; we are using, so to speak, a thinner layer of mind consciousness which is at the same time more permanent, more durable, a more metaphysical aspect of mind-stuff. Pushing from within, without, we move the combatting warring elements of the race-mind, if not to any considerable extent, at least to a small material extent. In fact, the

obstacles of time and space vanish as we use this inner layer of the mind which the study of Theosophy brings into operation.

Every real Theosophical book contains not only information and instruction and inspiration for us, but has within its covers the power of unfolding the faculty in us of obtaining further knowledge, information and inspiration. One who reads a page of *The Secret Doctrine,* not only gains the information and the inspiration that the page gives, but gains at the same time an added faculty for acquiring more; and again, if we pursue our studying against obstacles, we find the faculty is born in us which enables us to overcome these obstacles. The law of Karma holds in studying: Karma brings us no obstacle, without giving us at the same time the capacity to overcome it; so, if a Theosophical book presents obstacles and difficulties, let us not give up the study of it. We can overcome the obstacles.

Thus collectively, we are able to build up something in the nature of a living principle of study. By the fire of life, study not only becomes vital and interesting, but it becomes living, and living forces and fires manifest themselves in many ways in daily life, enabling us to make an adequate response to all men and women whatever their station in life. It is often said that Theosophy is not for all, and sometimes it is said that Theosophy is a difficult thing, meant only for those whose capacity is equal to great mental propositions. Both statements are true. But on those of us endowed with the mental energy to grasp, to understand and to live its great propositions devolves the responsibility of making those teachings real and palpable to all who come in our contact. Let us preach reincarnation in all the affairs of daily life by *a continuous attitude;* let the fact of our knowledge of reincarnation come out in all things that we do. To those who do not know about reincarnation, or believe not in it, our attitude is novel, and therefore brings in their minds question and inquiry, which we are able to respond to. Gradually, the truths of Theosophy permeate and are absorbed from those who have previously studied and know them. Century by century these great ideas permeate the hard atmosphere and impress the minds of those ready to respond to them. The main object of Theosophical study is to popularize its great truths, and to Theosophize all the walks of life.

CAN THERE BE SURETY?

TO every man come moments when surety is a crying need. Each life undergoes some moral struggles which leave the mind pondering with deeper intensity over the "fullness of the seeming void, the voidness of the seeming full." The Ego, constantly penetrating the outer world through the avenues of consciousness, realizes more and more how the mind's eye paints over the visible scene the image of inner sights, the colors of private thoughts. But what then? Are life and living beings without independent existence? If each mind shapes them differently and is affected by them according to its individual characteristics and past experience, what is left of the universe except a shifting mass of personal perceptions, no two of which are alike?

All is illusion, some mystics say. All is Maya, the theosophist says. The One Reality is beyond human speculation, and nothing else is other than a passing phase. With what, then, is the human mind to occupy itself?

For some minds speculation is an enchantment, a kind of music—exalting, yet undemanding—and metaphysics an intriguing exercise, a game or sport that is an end in itself. For others, abstract thinking is only a beginning, a ladder out of the world of particulars, of personal views and of relative truth. Conceivably, there is a mode of contemplation which has for its object, not particular ideas, but the reality which lies behind them.

One transcendent use of the mind is proposed in the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali, which begin by defining Concentration or Yoga as "the hindering of the modifications of the thinking principle," it being understood that the ancient Sage considered the mind an instrument of the soul. The mind, modified by every perception, cannot be a reliable organ, Patanjali taught, unless its activity is directed by a center "outside" human nature—the soul—wherein is seated the faculty of spiritual intelligence and moral discrimination. At the time of concentration, when the mind is stilled by the influence of the higher powers, the soul, it is said, "abides in the state of a spectator without a spectacle." This state, involving a total abstraction from the particulars of existence, does not imply,

however, the absence of knowledge, for, in Patanjali's view, *knowledge exists as an abstraction,* and not alone as a mental condition or thought-product.

But what, in this, throws light on man's everyday path? Incarnation, life here and now on the planes physical, psychic and mental, is made up of an unending succession of spectacles, and the thinking principle undergoes a constant series of modifications. If these are "hindered"—a gentle phrase for an extremely difficult operation—what effect does their removal from the mind have on the physical and psychic "realities" which the mind has taken into itself in the form of ideas? Where is the world when the soul abides as a spectator without a spectacle? What does the mind do when its natural motions are stilled? Above all, how will Concentration contribute to the sense of surety that man needs day by day, and that is desperately needed at ultimate moments?

It will be found that the Yoga Philosopher was not unaware of "grief, distress, trembling, and sighing," however lofty may be his suggestions for attaining peace of mind and soul. But he mentions these evidences of wavering equilibrium not as things in themselves, but as accompaniments of other conditions of the mind. The afflictions Patanjali singles out cannot be visited upon a man by outside causes: they are in every case inflictions by the mind upon itself. Their significance for the Teacher of Concentration is not the discomfort they impose upon human consciousness—several of the conditions named do not seriously disturb the average man—but their character as *obstacles to concentration.* Patanjali lists them as: "Sickness, Languor, Doubt, Carelessness, Laziness, Addiction to objects of sense, Erroneous Perception, Failure to attain any stage of abstraction and Instability in any state when attained." (In their progressive development, these conditions are perhaps named in reverse, since the mind is the origin of all effects in the lower principles.)

This is a curious suggestion: that states of mind giving rise to personal unhappiness be abandoned not for the sake of "happiness," but in order that the mind may not interfere with the *soul's* concentration upon knowledge. Even stranger may seem Patanjali's further direction about the afflictions named: "For the prevention of these, one truth should be dwelt upon." A note accompanying

this passage explains, "Any accepted truth which one approves, is here meant"—and thus the basis of Patanjali's psychology is laid open. Knowledge existing as an abstraction, there are truths that do not depend upon the variable perceptions of the human mind, and which therefore can be accepted without recourse to blind belief in a revelator or in any spiritual "expert." The acceptance of impersonal truths overpasses all individual differences of temperament and training, and by the same token, the truth itself has independent validity—no matter what changes of state or condition a particular mind may undergo.

Patanjali's counsel is simply that the mind aware of disturbing elements, or erratic motion, fix itself upon a steady reality, a philosophic law, a universal principle. But the success of the plan requires that the mind have available at all times some "accepted truth," which in turn predicates that thought has already been focussed upon matters beyond the immediate concerns of the personal man. Study of a philosophy like Theosophy, in such case, would not be motivated by any expectation of reward. It would be pursued as the natural work of the thinking principle, directed by a higher consciousness—the soul—and would have as its aim the penetration of the mind by knowledge itself, that is, by abstract truth.

The mind expands upon entering knowledge as a vapor spreads out in space. The thinking principle can encompass ever greater limits and overcome all barriers to its growth, if it is not confined to the small vessels of intellect, prejudice, and preconception. The destiny of the mind is infinity, and if it reaches to truths of universal application, it joins the soul in *contemplation.* The ancient meaning of this term is to observe from a sacred place or temple designated by an augur—a master of divination. But it is probable that "contemplation" originally described an interior process, with the mind taking the ground of the soul and observing the signs and omens of karma from the standpoint of soul evolution. This at least would be practice in the only kind of divination which has philosophical significance—the concentration which provides the Ego with unshakable surety and is the prevention of all unmindfulness.

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK—

WOULD *not the ideal solution to human problems be reached if men were to renounce group activities of all kinds, and limit their relationships to single individuals? Mob psychology illustrates the maxim that when men group together, it is the lowest common denominator that prevails, and there seems to be a feeling that if you remove an individual from the crowd, you have a good chance of rousing the best in him.*

Such a condition would represent an ideal solution only on the theory that men are inherently imperfect creatures with definite limitations to their possibilities for progress. The postulate of man as a soul, on the other hand, carries with it the implication of *unlimited* potentialities in the human being, an endless vista of *attainable* perfections. It is quite true that a man tends to act better as an individual than he does as a "mass man," but this does not mean that he cannot maintain just as high a standard for himself whether or not he is acting with others.

There is plenty of justification, nowadays, for individuals to deal with men as units, and to "renounce" domination by mass institutions. But insofar as this movement spreads through *fear* of institutions, it is built upon weakness. Working with one or two persons is our opportunity to learn the principles of human relationships, but these need to be applied to all of our work in and with institutions of whatever kind. As long as we conscientiously treat a group of men as respectfully (for the sake of each member therein) as we treat one isolated man whom we have come to know, we will be putting institutions to a proper use, without degrading or belittling human beings in the process. After all, is it not implicit in the idea of universal brotherhood that the time can come when men will work better together than they do alone?

Then, too, there are lessons to be learned in groups which we can hardly learn by ourselves or in company with a single other person or selected friends. Every temperament has its own flaw, as well as its own virtue, which shows up when placed against the background of a cooperative enterprise. The "easy-go-lucky" person can somehow manage to get through his own business without too many mishaps, but the inadequacy of a "squeaking through"

policy is unmistakably disclosed—and thus correction is encouraged —in a larger context, when it is clear that irresponsibility hurts others, not only oneself. At the other end of the personality scale, the "efficient" type can endlessly plan and subdivide day and night to his heart's content without troubling anyone else unduly (or so it seems). But the same tactics in a group situation inevitably raise clouds of irritation until one sees the need to balance himself as a human being, instead of as an efficient machine. Or take the qualities of resourcefulness, ingenuity, cheerfulness, and tolerance —all related, in one way or another, to a sense of balance, fitness, and humor—where else than in a group are these traits so appreciated and so necessary?

What can the Theosophical student say when he encounters one who asserts that H. P. Blavatsky was a dogmatist?

He can agree or not, depending upon how the other person defines his terms. Webster's gives the following definition of dogmatism: "Boldness and positiveness of spirit, manner and expression concerning what one regards as true," under which terms H. P. Blavatsky might rank as a dogmatist—and some others might wish to qualify. In defining a dogmatist, however, Webster becomes more equivocal: "One given to positive assertion and to making statements without argument or evidence." The last phrase gives us the source of the invidious meaning of the word, and if our companion seeks to attach that quality to H.P.B., he can be readily refuted by evidence and argument both. Indeed, so consistent was her battle against dogmas and authoritarianisms of whatever stripe, that almost any of her articles, particularly her *Lucifer* editorials, will be found to contain, explicitly or implicitly, an attack on those twin jailers of the mind. Let her "accuser" read "A Society Without a Dogma" (THEOSOPHY XXXIII, 362), and see how H. P. Blavatsky links dogma and faith together as the "right and left pillars of every soul-crushing Theology." It would be vastly more sensible (and time saving) to dispose of arguments "supporting" H.P.B.'s supposed dogmatism than to try to collect the almost innumerable evidences in her writings to the contrary.

This is especially true, since the person who charges H.P.B. with dogmatism has probably had little, if any, contact with her directly

(through her own writings, that is). Such an opinion is most often evolved from secondhand information. Dogmatism is by no means lacking in those who believe without knowledge and who, therefore, assert without proof. For this reason, those who are *students* of H.P.B. rely upon no other interpreters than her own words.

Mr. Judge mentions in the OCEAN *that the Ego remains in Devachan until all the psychic energies set in motion during life are exhausted. Is it possible to exhaust these energies during life, and so shorten the Devachanic period?*

It is possible to shorten the Devachanic period, according to Theosophical teachings, by the course of action pursued in life, but it would seem to be more to the point to attempt to *limit* the psychic energies we evolve, rather than simply try to exhaust them after they have been generated. Such psychic energies as are formed so copiously in day dreams, for instance, and in the wistful images formed in our minds by overmuch light reading, can seldom find their fulfillment here in this life, and therefore they require "working out" in the subjective after-death states.

Not all the "psychic energies" referred to by Mr. Judge are of such a light and trivial nature: there are aspirations for the welfare of others, the desire to be of help to one's fellows. These feelings cannot and should not be dispensed with. And yet they are not wholly necessary. Their value lies not in their psychic or emotional character, but in the fact that they are at least partly unselfish *aspirations.* We need to preserve the aspiration while eliminating or controlling, insofar as possible, the emotion with which it is connected. Unless we transmute our aspirations from desires to *facts*—no matter how inadequate the attempt may seem—we are "letting the psychic outrun the manasic."

We can speculate, further, that the perfected man does not engender any psychic impulses or energies at all. Or, rather, that a course of action is never, for him, *originated* in the psychic nature; but that his energy is employed only as the instrument for the purposes of the higher nature, *Buddhi-Manas.* So many of our actions spring from the impulsive bidding of desire, that the shortening of Devachan might well result from our efforts to make the psychic nature simply the executor of will-born actions.

THE "ELIXIR OF LIFE"

(From a Chela's Diary)

By G____ M____ F.T.S.

III

BUT there is another portion of the Great Secret to which we must allude, and which is *now,* for the first in a long series of ages, allowed to be given out to the world, as the hour for it is now come.

The educated reader need not be reminded again that one of the great discoveries which have immortalised the name of Darwin is the law that an organism has always a tendency to repeat, at an analogous period in its life, the action of its progenitors, the more surely and completely in proportion to their proximity in the scale of life. One result of this is, that, in general, organised beings usually die at a period (on an average) the same as that of their progenitors. It is true that there is a great difference between the *actual* ages at which individuals of any species die. Disease, accidents and famine are the main agents in causing this. But there is, in each species, a well-known limit within which the Race-life lies, and none are known to survive beyond it. This applies to the human species as well as any other. Now, supposing that every possible sanitary condition had been complied with, and every accident and disease avoided by a man of ordinary frame, in some particular case there would still, as is known to medical men, come a time when the particles of the body would feel the hereditary tendency to do that which leads inevitably to dissolution, *and would obey it.* It must be obvious to any reflecting man that, if by *any procedure* this critical climacteric could be once thoroughly passed over, the subsequent danger of "death" would be proportionally less as the years progressed. Now this, which no ordinary and unprepared

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NOTE.—This concluding installment of "The 'Elixir of Life'" is reprinted from *The Theosophist,* April, 1882. That the emphasis on the conquest of "death" is somewhat misleading, as are also the statements on the removal of the Adepts from the world, is evident from an article—presumably by H. P. Blavatsky—which was published in *The Theosophist,* July 1884. (See p. 511.) Other extensions of the points raised will be republished in a subsequent issue.—Eds. THEOSOPHY.

mind and body can do, is possible sometimes for the will and the frame of one who has been specially prepared. There are fewer of the grosser particles present to feel the hereditary bias—there is the assistance of the reinforced "interior men" (whose normal duration is always greater even in natural death) to the visible outer shell, and there is the drilled and indomitable Will to direct and wield the whole.*

From that time forward, the course of the aspirant is clearer. He has conquered "The Dweller of the Threshold"—the hereditary enemy of his race, and, though still exposed to ever-new dangers in his progress towards Nirvana, he is flushed with victory, and with new confidence and new powers to second it, can press onward to perfection.

For, it must be remembered that nature everywhere acts by Law, and that the process of purification we have been describing in the visible material body, also takes place in those which are interior, and not visible to the Scientists, by modifications of the same process. All is on the change, and the metamorphoses of the more ethereal bodies imitate, though in successively multiplied duration, the career of the grosser, gaining an increasingly wider range of relations with the surrounding kosmos, till in Nirvana the most rarefied Individuality is merged at last into the Infinite Totality.

From the above description of the process, it will be inferred why it is that "Adepts" are so seldom seen in ordinary life; for, *pari passu,* with the etherealisation of their bodies, and the development of their power, grows an increasing distaste, and a so-to-speak "contempt" for the things of our ordinary mundane existence. Like the fugitive who successively casts away in his flight those articles which incommode his progress, beginning with the heaviest, so the aspirant eluding "death" abandons all on which the latter can take hold.

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*In this connection we may as well show what modern science, and especially *physiology,* have to say as to the power of human will. "The force of will is a potent element in determining longevity. This single point must be granted without argument, that of two men every way alike and similarly circumstanced, the one who has the greater courage and grit will be longer-lived. One does not need to practise medicine long to learn that men die who might just as well live if they resolved to live, and that myriads who are invalids could become strong if they had the native or acquired will to vow they would do so. Those who have no other quality favourable to life, whose bodily organs are nearly all diseased, to whom each day is a day of pain, who are beset by life-shortening influences, yet do live by will alone."—*Dr. George M. Beard.*

In the progress to Negation everything got rid of is a help. As we said before, the Adept does not become "immortal," as the word is ordinarily understood. By or about the time when the death-limit of his race is passed, *he is actually dead,* in the ordinary sense; that is to say, he has relieved himself of all or nearly all such material particles as would have necessitated in disruption the agony of dying. He has been dying gradually during the whole period of his Initiation. The catastrophe cannot happen twice over. He has only spread over a number of years the mild process of dissolution which others endure from a brief moment to a few hours. The highest Adept is, in fact, dead to, and absolutely unconscious of the World; he is oblivious of its pleasures, careless of its miseries—in so far as sentimentalism goes, for the stern sense of Duty never leaves him blind to its very existence. For the new ethereal senses opening to wider spheres are to ours much in the relation of ours to the Infinitely Little. New desires and enjoyments, new dangers and new hindrances arise, with new sensations and new perceptions; and far away down in the mist—both literally and metaphorically—is our dirty little earth left below by those who have virtually "gone to join the gods."

And from this account, too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophists to "procure for them communication with the highest Adepts." It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say—"This is not *god-like.* This is the acme of selfishness," . . . But let him realise that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to once more submit to Incarnation. And is the result of all that have gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?

A deep consideration of all that we have written will also give the Theosophists an idea of what they demand when they ask to be put in the way of gaining *practically* "higher powers." Well, there, as plainly as words can put it, is the Path. . . . . Can they tread it?

Nor must it be disguised that what to the ordinary mortal are expected dangers, temptations and enemies, also beset the way of

the neophyte. And that for no fanciful cause, but the simple reason that he is, in fact, acquiring new senses, has yet no practice in their use, and has never before seen the things he sees. A man born blind suddenly endowed with vision would not at once master the meaning of perspective, but would, like a baby, imagine, in one case, the moon to be within his reach and, in the other, grasp a live coal with most reckless confidence.

And what, it may be asked, is to recompense this abnegation of all the pleasures of life, this cold surrender of all mundane interests, this stretching forward to an unknown goal which seems ever more unattainable? For, unlike some of the anthropomorphic creeds, Occultism offers to its votaries no eternally permanent heaven of material pleasure, to be gained at once by one quick dash through the grave. As has, in fact, often been the case, many would be prepared willingly to die *now* for the sake of the paradise hereafter. But Occultism gives no such prospect of cheaply and immediately gained infinitude of pleasure, wisdom and existence. It only promises extensions of these, stretching in successive arches obscured by successive veils, in unimaginable succession up the long vista which leads to Nirvana. And this too, qualified by the necessity that new powers entail new responsibilities, and that the capacity of increased pleasure entails the capacity of increased sensibility to pain. To this, the only answer that can be given is two-fold: (firstly) the consciousness of Power is itself the most exquisite of pleasures, and is unceasingly gratified in the progress onwards with new means for its exercise; and (secondly) as has been already said—*this* is the only road by which there is the faintest scientific likelihood that "death" can be avoided, perpetual memory secured, infinite wisdom attained, and hence an immense helping of mankind made possible, once that the adept has safely crossed the turning point. Physical and metaphysical logic requires and endorses the fact that only by gradual absorption into infinity can the part become acquainted with the Whole, and that that which is *now something* can only feel, know, and enjoy *everything* when lost in Absolute Totality in the vortex of that *Unalterable Circle* wherein our knowledge becomes ignorance, and the Everything itself is identified with the Nothing.

IS THE DESIRE TO "LIVE" SELFISH?

THE passage "to live, to live, to live must be the unswerving resolve," occurring in the article on "The Elixir of Life," is often quoted by superficial and unsympathetic readers as an argument that the teachings of Occultism are the most concentrated form of selfishness. In order to determine whether the critics are right or wrong, the meaning of the word "selfishness" must first be ascertained. According to an established authority, selfishness is that

> Exclusive regard to one's own interest or happiness; that supreme self-love or self-preference which leads a person to direct his purposes to the advancement of his own interest, power, or happiness, without regarding those of others.

In short, an absolutely selfish individual is one who cares for himself and none else, or in other words, one who is so strongly imbued with a sense of the importance of his own personality that to him it is the crown of all thoughts, desires, and aspirations, beyond which lies the perfect blank. Now, can an Occultist be then said to be "selfish" when he desires to *live* in the sense in which the word is used by the writer of the article on "The Elixir of Life"? It has been said over and over again that the ultimate end of every aspirant after Occult Knowledge is Nirvana or Mukti, when the individual, freed from all Mayavic Upadhi, becomes one with Paramatma, or the Son identifies himself with the Father, in Christian phraseology. For that purpose, every veil of illusion which creates a sense of personal isolation, a feeling of separateness from The All, must be torn asunder, or, in other words, the aspirant must gradually discard all sense of selfishness with which we are all more or less afflicted. A study of the Law of Cosmic Evolution teaches us that the higher the evolution, the more does it tend towards Unity. In fact, Unity is the ultimate possibility of Nature, and those who through vanity and selfishness go against her purposes, cannot but incur the punishment of annihilation. The Occultist thus recognizes that unselfishness and a feeling of universal philanthropy are the inherent laws of our being, and all he does is to attempt to destroy the chains of selfishness forged upon us all by Maya.

The struggle, then, between Good and Evil, God and Satan, Suras and Asuras, Devas and Daityas, which is mentioned in the

NOTE.—This article is from *The Theosophist*. See note, p. 507.—Eds. THEOSOPHY.

sacred books of all the nations and races, symbolizes the battle between unselfish and selfish impulses, which take place in a man who tries to follow the higher purposes of Nature, until the animal tendencies, created by selfishness, are completely conquered, and the enemy thoroughly routed and annihilated. It has also been often put forth in various Theosophical and other Occult writings that the only difference between an ordinary man who works along with Nature during the course of cosmic evolution and an Occultist, is that the latter, by his superior knowledge, adopts such methods of training and discipline as will hurry on that process of evolution, and he thus reaches in a comparatively short time the apex which the ordinary individual will take perhaps billions of years to reach. In short, in a few thousand years he approaches that type of evolution which ordinary humanity attains in the sixth or seventh Round of the Manvantara, *i.e.,* cyclic progression.

It is evident that an average man cannot become a Mahatma in one life, or rather in one incarnation. Now those, who have studied the Occult teachings concerning Devachan and our after-states, will remember that between two incarnations there is a considerable period of subjective existence. The greater the number of such devachanic periods, the greater is the number of years over which this evolution is extended. The chief aim of the Occultist is therefore to so control himself as to be able to regulate his future states, and thereby gradually shorten the duration of his devachanic existence between two incarnations. In the course of his progress, there comes a time when, between one physical death and his next re-birth, there is no Devachan but a kind of spiritual sleep, the shock of death having, so to say, stunned him into a state of unconsciousness, from which he gradually recovers to find himself re-born, to continue his purpose. The period of this sleep may vary from twenty-five to two hundred years, depending upon the degree of his advancement. But even this period may be said to be a waste of time, and hence all his exertions are directed to shorten its duration, so as to gradually come to a point when the passage from one state of existence into another is almost imperceptible. This is his last incarnation, as it were, for the shock of death no more stuns him. This is the idea the writer of the article on "The Elixir of Life" means to convey when he says:

> By or about the time when the death-limit of his race is passed *he is actually dead,* in the ordinary sense; that is to say, he has relieved himself of all or nearly all such material particles as would have necessitated in disruption the agony of dying. He has been dying gradually during the whole period of his Initiation. The catastrophe cannot happen twice over. He has only spread over a number of years the mild process of dissolution which others endure from a brief moment to a few hours. The highest Adept is, in fact, dead to, and absolutely unconscious of, the world; he is oblivious of its pleasures, careless of its miseries, in so far as sentimentalism goes, for the stern sense of duty never leaves him blind to its very existence.

The process of the emission and attraction of atoms, which the Occultist controls, has been discussed at length in that article and in other writings. It is by these means that he gets rid gradually of all the old gross particles of his body, substituting for them finer and more ethereal ones, till at last the former Sthula Sharira is completely dead and disintegrated, and he lives in a body entirely of his own creation, suited to his work. The body is essential to his purposes; as "The Elixir of Life" says:

> To do good, as in everything else, a man *must have* time and materials to work with, and this is a necessary means to the acquirement of powers by which infinitely more good can be done than without them. When these are once mastered, the opportunities to use them will arrive.

Giving the practical instructions for that purpose, the same paper continues: "The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical."

Losing sight of the above important considerations, the following passage is entirely misunderstood:

> And from this account too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophist to "procure for them communication with the highest Adepts." It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say: "This is not god-like. This is the acme of selfishness." . . . But let him realize that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to once more submit to Incarnation. And is the result of all that have gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?

Now, in condemning the above passage as inculcating selfishness, superficial critics neglect many profound truths. In the first place, they forget the other extracts already quoted which impose *self-denial* as a necessary condition of success, and which say that, with progress, new senses and new powers are acquired with which infinitely more good can be done than without them. The more spiritual the Adept becomes the less can he meddle with *mundane gross* affairs and the more he has to confine himself to spiritual work. It has been repeated, times out of number, that the work on the spiritual plane is as superior to the work on the intellectual plane as the latter is superior to that on the physical plane. The very high Adepts, therefore, do help humanity, *but only spiritually:* they are constitutionally incapable of meddling with *worldly* affairs: But this applies only to very high Adepts. There are various degrees of adeptship, and those of each degree work for humanity on the planes to which they may have risen. It is only the Chelas that can live in the world, until they rise to a certain degree. And it is because the Adepts *do* care for the world that they make their Chelas live in and work for it, as many of those who study the subject are aware.

Each cycle produces its own Occultists capable of working for the humanity of the time on all the different planes; but when the Adepts foresee that at a particular period humanity will be incapable of producing Occultists for work on particular planes, for such occasions they do provide by either voluntarily giving up their further progress and waiting until humanity reaches that period, or by refusing to enter into Nirvana and submitting to reincarnation so as to be ready for work when the time comes. And although the world may not be aware of the fact, yet there are even now certain Adepts who have preferred to remain *in statu quo* and refuse to take the higher degrees, for the benefit of the future generations of humanity. In short, as the Adepts work harmoniously, since unity is the fundamental law of their being, they have, as it were, made a division of labour, according to which each works on the plane appropriate to himself, for the spiritual elevation of us all—and the process of longevity mentioned in "The Elixir of Life" is only the means to the end which, far from being selfish, is the most unselfish purpose for which a human being can labour.

THE EXTREMES OF LOWER MIND

"Between degrading superstition and still more degrading brutal materialism, the White Dove of Truth has hardly room whereon to rest her weary unwelcome feet." —A Master's Letter

THE mind of man may be likened to a pair of scales. Lower Manas is at the ends, while Higher Manas sits at the point of equipoise between. It is as difficult to find a man of equilibrium as to bring a weighing machine to perfect balance and repose.

The nature of lower mind, says Wm. Q. Judge, is to swing to extremes, to fly to a pleasant idea and then to an unpleasant one. It seems incapable of rising above both the pleasant and the unpleasant to the position of learning the lessons they hold.

Men oftentimes mistake mere change for progress. They think that because they have altered their habits, or changed their minds, or forsaken a course of action admittedly wrong, that real spiritual advance has been achieved. But is this necessarily so? In many instances, the change is merely a swing of Lower Manas to the opposite extreme, the giving-up of something bad for something else that is equally false and unprincipled.

The eternal problem of spiritual instructors is how to help men out of the bonds of one "extreme" without giving the impression that they advocate the other. If they teach humility, for example, they are accused of trying to create cowards. If they uphold courage and fearlessness, men use the injunction to justify their stubbornness. If they war against superstition, they are charged with preaching atheism and materialistic disbelief. How can they make us understand that in approving charity and self-denial, they would not have us become beggars, or to exhaust our means to the extent of becoming dependent upon others for support? Though they bring the leaven of true reform, all spiritual teachers are classed as impostors by those they come to serve. They are looked upon as frauds bent upon destruction of the good and true. Why is this so, do we ask? It is because men live in their *extremes.* Lower Manas takes the position, "If you are not for me, then you are against me." Hence, those who are neither *for* nor *against,* but simply on the side of truth, suffer ceaseless persecution. "It has always been

a grave question with me," says Wm. Q. Judge, "whether the boasted 'freedom from superstition' of Western 19th century civilization is an unmixed good, or any evidence of real progress." For with this supposed advance, he said, "nearly every vestige of true religious feeling" was swept away. In her battle against superstition, H. P. Blavatsky never had the aim, of which she was accused, of promoting atheism or disbelief. When she waged war against "personal followings" and "dogmatic authority," she did not intend thereby to discredit the reality of the *Guruparampara* chain or give her stamp of approval to that false sense of "independence" which is so prevalent today. Blind worship of a person and an arrogant sense of self-sufficiency are again the extremes of lower mind—one no better than the other. Let him consider first the quality of his feeling and attitude toward those to whom he *owes* respect. "Respect for spiritual instructors," it will be remembered, is declared by Krishna to be a necessary part of true wisdom.

How rare a thing it is to find a man governed by Higher Mind! How seldom do we meet a man of balance, a person who has found that fine line of equilibrium within himself, whereon alone true progress may be attained! The reactionary nature of lower mind, in its swift and automatic swings from one side to the other, beclouds all light from the soul. Controlled by *Kama,* or desire, it argues and contends on every point.

Is it not for this reason, perhaps—that is, because men live in their *extremes*—that almost every reform movement turns radical in the end? History reveals instances of those who suffer the abuses of religious priestcraft, or chafe under the tyranny of unjust government, to the extent that they can bear it no longer. The outcome is that they always rise up in arms, demanding a change—but with what results? In most cases, nothing of real progress is achieved. When any change is pressed by individuals who have not first effected a reform *in themselves,* it is destined to failure. In any reform sponsored by lower mind, tyranny merely changes hands. The abused become the abusers, the victims of harrowing crimes become perpetrators of still worse ones. A swing of Lower Manas has occurred, but only to another extreme.

The balancing of a set of scales is not accomplished by the use of extreme weights and measures on either end, but by the gentle,

delicate levelling of both ends with the center. The harmonizing principles of reform are not brought into action by angry personal reactions to wrong. In both cases, equilibrium depends upon a common neutral center, impartial to the sides. Just as mechanical balance in the scales rests upon the fulcrum which is ever unmoved, so must all lasting reform be built upon the changeless laws of Higher Mind.

The elements of true progress, therefore, are not to be found in the horizontal shiftings of lower Mind, but in the vertical movement toward the Higher. Real progress, as Abraham Lincoln held, always bears a relation to the human heart.

"With Courage and Confidence"

We move from death to death until we realize our true natures and take the course pointed out by the Wise Men of all ages—the course by which They gained Their wisdom. Theosophy was brought into the world to wake up the souls who are in the least degree susceptible to an awakening, to join that body of pilgrims moving on their way with their faces turned in the direction of the Masters of Wisdom, regardless of their present conditions, quickly or slowly clearing away their defects that they may be the pioneers and helpers and guides of the humanities that are to follow. Moving on with courage and confidence in the Great Beings, they gradually learn and come to a resumption of those powers which we all possess but do not express. Nor can one express in words the power, the happiness, the freedom from fear of any kind, the realization, while in a body, of immortality which spiritual knowledge brings. This knowledge and these powers are within the reach of all of us. As the ancients said, "The Great Self shines in all beings, but in all it does not shine forth." We may reach that One Self, the One Spirit, whence come all law, all possibilities—which has the power to produce all changes, but of itself changes not at all—ever the experiencer, the enjoyer or the sufferer of the changes. Power comes from this knowledge, which springs up spontaneously within us because it resides in the innermost parts of our natures.

—Robert Crosbie

ON THE LOOKOUT

"Death Be Not Proud"

The story of John Gunther, Jr.—*Death Be Not Proud* (Harper's, 1949)—has had wide circulation. (In condensed form, the book appeared in the February *Ladies' Home Journal* and the March *Reader's Digest.*) The thousands or millions who have read of one boy's losing battle with a brain tumor have, in the father's memoir, a vicarious experience with life and death, fear and uncertainty, hope, despair, and the will to live. But the student of Karma and Reincarnation will be impressed by other aspects of Johnny Gunther's story, also: the mystery of the incarnation of *Manas,* the definiteness of the skandhas that lead the Ego to a particular birth, the curious analogy between psychological stresses and strains and the form taken by physical disease, and, above all, the extreme anxiety often experienced by those who face death with no conviction of individual immortality.

Death Be Not Proud sketches briefly a family which, at the onset of tragedy, was scattered three ways—the parents divorced and the boy away at school. In intellectual attainments all three may be regarded as far above average, and the boy himself, at 15, had an unusual grasp of abstract science, that is, pure physics and higher mathematics. At the same time he showed a slowness in physical coordination (not uncommon where intellect matures early), and was reported absent-minded. His father remarks that although at one of his schools his I.Q. was said to be the highest ever recorded there, he "was a great procrastinator," and lacked assertiveness and self-reliance. Yet the main line of Johnny's life was already clear: "his passionate love for science. Many things Johnny did sloppily, and after many false starts and delay, but his scientific drawings and charts almost always had an exquisite precision."

Unsurety

Mr. Gunther declares that no one is yet certain of the causes of brain tumors, or the laws of their perverse growth. (This seems to be true, at least of "orthodox" physicians.) Partly because of the

baffling character of the disease, and partly because of a desire to prevent at all costs the death of their son, the Gunthers never ceased a desperate search for other remedies, no matter what form of treatment was going on—surgery, X-ray, mustard gas, diet, etc. Over 33 doctors were at one time or another actively involved with Johnny's case, but apparently neither parents nor physicians—with one exception—had full confidence in the techniques employed. John Gunther says, "It was our worst burden that we were never sure about anything, not merely from one day to another, but from one moment to the next."

The only doctor with an unshakable conviction was an unorthodox M.D., Max Gerson, who had cured cancer and other illnesses by a system of diet, and had had long experience in brain tumor cases. Using a saltless and fatless diet with a minimum of protein at first, Dr. Gerson had proved that, given the opportunity, the body will heal itself. The Gerson diet is potassium-rich and sodium-free, with specially prepared fruit and fresh vegetables that burn down to a minimum of ash, so that the body is not taxed to get rid of waste, and can apply its energies to building healthy cells.

Stubborn Predicter

Driven to despair of any other course, and impressed by Gerson's own conviction, the Gunthers gave the diet method a trial. Not even in this case, however, could they manage to feel much confidence in the possibility of a cure, and Johnny himself was impatient of the diet, though he followed it meticulously. The other doctors were openly sceptical or incredulous. That the diet turned out to be a spectacular success owed very little, therefore, to any psychological increment.

Gerson took Johnny off penicillin, insisting that the drug could irritate a tumor; he did not permit transfusions or any other emergency measures, and he demanded for his patient absolute *rest.* Within a week, Johnny, who had been "fading fast" and had been given up by some of his doctors, was feeling better, and inside of a month recovery seemed well on its way. Eventually, the tumor "spontaneously opened of itself, as Gerson had stubbornly predicted it would," and the pus ("dead matter," in Gerson's view) was evacuated naturally.

"AN INFILTERING SPIDERY TYPE"

Yet the physical cure was apparently not enough to change the line of Johnny's karma: it certainly did not remove his obsessions and fears. A relapse occurred. Although John Gunther cannot furnish a clear reason for the event, he tells that when Gerson exhibited Johnny and other patients to a number of prominent officials and physicians, the occasion "upset Johnny gravely." The next day the boy had a sharp attack of trembling, together with amnesia, blotting out all memory of the Gerson exhibition. This began the decline. It is noteworthy that, as the father remarks, the attacks of amnesia usually came if Johnny thought that a *doctor was worried* about him. Gunther observes, "He sought to believe in each of his doctors implicitly—more than we did, perhaps. He had to, to survive." Other serious operations followed, which the boy dreaded, and which were, in effect, put over on him. But all efforts were unsuccessful, and Johnny, 15 months after the tumor was discovered, passed away.

Johnny's tumor, as his father describes it, was "of an infiltering spidery type that creep and burrow along the minute crevasses of the brain, slowly and inevitably destroying function, and almost impossible to remove." Whatever its physical origin might have been, there must, according to the theosophical view, have been mental and then psychic causes before the disturbance reached a physical form. Entries in Johnny's diary, written during the period of his illness, touch on what seem to have been nagging psychological problems for the boy.

"A DISMAL ACCIDENT"?

Mr. Gunther exclaims several times over the bitter fate that decreed an early death for a brilliant boy, and was especially baffled by an irony that would single out his *brain* to be the seat of disease:

> *Why* was Johnny being subjected to this merciless experience? I tried to explain that suffering is an inevitable part of most lives, that none of this ordeal was without some purpose, that pain is a constituent of all the processes of growth, that perhaps the entire harrowing episode would make his brain even finer, subtler, and more sensitive than it was. He did not appear to be convinced. Then there was a question I asked myself incessantly. Why—of all things—should Johnny be afflicted in that part of

> him which was his best, the brain? What philosophical explanation could one find for that? Was all this a dismal accident, purely barren and fortuitous? . . . But if the connection of circumstances was not fortuitous, not accidental, where was justice?

Perhaps all the father's explanations are true—but not on a one-life basis. Only if the Ego itself "arranged" the trial for its purposes of growth and discipline, might the experience be regarded as deliberate education. It is clear, for example, that for the duration of his illness, Johnny renounced the luxury of procrastination, and accomplished surprising feats of study and application —and this, as his father said, with only half a brain. With his mother's help he thought hard about the meaning of life, the qualities of the ideal human being, and the need for concentration of mind and consideration of others. Except for reincarnation, what theory can propose that Johnny's intensified life of the mind has left *him* with a due harvest?

"God Was Helpless, Too"

Frances Gunther's view of life and death assigns neither Johnny nor "God" any responsibility for the manner of her son's death. Mrs. Gunther writes that "In a way I did not feel that God was personally involved at all." "God," Mrs. Gunther says, "sat beside us," but when doctors and parents were helpless, "in His way, God, standing by us in our hour of need, God in His infinite wisdom and mercy and loving kindness, God in all His omnipotence, was helpless too."

According to Mrs. Gunther, "Life is a myriad series of mutations, chemical, physical, and spiritual":

> The same infinitely intricate, yet profoundly simple, law of life that produced Johnny—his rare and precious soul, his sweetness, his gaiety, his gallantry, his courage: for it was only after his death, from his brief simple diaries, written as directly as he wrote out his beloved chemical experiments, that we learned he had known all along how grave was his illness, and that even as we had gaily pretended with him that all was well and he was completely recovering, he was pretending with us, and bearing our burden with the spirit, the élan, of a singing soldier or a laughing saint—that law of life which out of infinite mutation had produced Johnny, that law still mutating, destroyed him. God Himself, no less than us, is part of that law. . . . It is im-

> personal, inevitable. Grief cannot be concerned with it. At least, mine could not.
>
> My grief, I find, is not desolation or rebellion at universal law or deity. I find grief to be much simpler and sadder. Contemplating the Eternal Deity and His Universal Laws leaves me grave but dry-eyed. But a sunny fast wind along the Sound, good sailing weather, a new light boat, will shake me to tears: how Johnny would have loved this boat, this wind, this sunny day!

Thus, alongside the intellectual basis for stoicism, together with the concept of fortuitous "law," is the inescapable sense of a distinct individual, unique and irreplaceable. This, the theosophist would say, is the key to the mysteries of existence: the *immortal soul,* for only life in the form of undying beings can understand life in the form of law and evolution. From the standpoint of the "outer material and periodical form of the Spiritual Entity," in H. P. Blavatsky's words, no man can be held responsible for the consequences of his birth, and "almost every individual life is, in its full development, a sorrow" (*Key to Theosophy,* p. 139). As declared in *The Secret Doctrine,* "The reincarnationists and believers in Karma alone dimly perceive that the whole secret of life is in the unbroken series of its manifestations: whether in, or apart from, the physical body."

Note On Bee Behavior

Rather painstaking experiments with bees have finally brought out the answers to several questions which have puzzled observers for many years. The bee provides one of the most fascinating of insect studies by reason of his unique position as a member of a highly developed social organization whose activities are constructive to human beings. The hive is rivalled in complexity and efficiency only by the ant-hill, which lacks its useful features.

Due primarily to the work of Dr. Karl von Frisch of the University of Graz, Austria, fairly conclusive answer can now be made to the question of how bees are enabled to find their way back again and again to a source of food supply. It has been thought that it was sight alone which guided the insects in their flight; other speculations included the theory of guidance by electrical or magnetic currents. But it now appears that bees possess two very strongly developed senses in addition to those previously catalogued—a sense of direction and a sense of distance travelled. A dish of syrup

placed, say, one hundred yards north of a hive of bees, is eventually discovered and repeatedly tapped by a few bees. After several visits have been made from the dish to the hive and back, the dish is quietly moved, with the bees still feeding from it, to a point thirty yards west of the original feeding place. When the bees leave the dish, they do not follow a "bee-line" to their hive, which is now southeast of them, but rather they fly straight south. When they do not find the hive after they have flown the remembered one hundred yards, they begin flying round and round in concentric circles of ever increasing size until they finally recognize their surroundings and find their way home.

"Bee Language"

Other findings on bee intelligence are gathered together by Dr. Colin G. Butler in an article "Aspects of Bee Behaviour" (*Science News IX,* Penguin Books, England). It has been remarked that it may take days for a dish of syrup to be discovered by a cruising bee, but once found, the number of bees visiting it increased with great rapidity. Just what method of communication did the bee use to inform her sisters of the food supply? For a while it was thought that the bee led the others to the dish by flying in front of them, or by laying a trail of scent between the dish and the hive. Actually, Dr. Butler reports, the bee does neither of these things:

> She is, however, fully capable of informing them of the presence and source of a particular kind of nectar or pollen and, furthermore, the direction from the hive in which the flowers in which she has found this food are situated and the approximate distance between them and the hive. When a bee has found some profitable source of food in the field . . . she fills her pollen baskets or honey stomach as the case may be and returns to her hive. . . . Here she proceeds to dance a little dance more or less vigorously. The more profitable the source of food the more vigorously she dances. Some of the younger bees that have just reached foraging age and are near to the dancing bee pay a great deal of attention to her, turn and face her, often follow her movements, and every now and then the dancer feeds to them small quantities of the nectar or pollen that she has collected. . . . Later some of these recipients will leave the hive in their turn in search of this perfume and thus of the flowers from which it and the nectar or pollen were obtained.

"Interpreting The Dance"

This is much to have "translated" from the language of the bees into human tongue, and few would think that any more exact rendering were possible—or that a more detailed communication existed between such tiny creatures. Yet persistent study—Dr. von Frisch has devoted 25 years to the problem—divulges an unsuspected exactitude in the bees' "speech," suggesting an intelligence on a different plane than the human, but well worth appreciation. Dr. Butler continues with his description of the bee's choreographic art:

> The dance itself is somewhat variable, but fundamentally it consists of a series of figures-of-eight repeated at frequent intervals. If the source of food is located only a short distance away from the hive the two loops of the figure-of-eight are superimposed one on top of the other, but as the distance between the hive and the food becomes greater the two loops of the eight become more and more discrete until, when we reach the stage that the source of food is situated at a distance of about one hundred yards from the hive, a perfect eight with entirely distinct loops is being formed.
>
> As the distance becomes greater than one hundred yards a straight run of proportionately increasing length is interpolated between the two loops of the eight and during the performance of this part of the dance, the straight run, the dancer wags her abdomen rapidly from one side to the other. Thus the dancer is able to indicate to her sisters the approximate distance between her hive and the source of food. . . . If the straight run is made vertically upwards on the comb then the source of food lies in the direction of the sun at that time; if the run is performed vertically downwards the source of food lies in exactly the opposite direction, and so on. Thus a bee is able to inform her sisters of the richness of a source of food, of the kind of food, that is to say whether it be pollen or nectar; of the perfume of the flowers in which this food is to be found, and of the direction from the hive in which these flowers lie and their distance from the hive!

"Other and Various Intellects"

There is undoubted value in the perception that man's is not the only intelligence on this globe, for it could do much to increase our respect for other forms of life which, while subservient to man, have yet their own purposes and powers. The conceit which causes man to consider his the only true consciousness in the universe was many times exposed by H. P. Blavatsky, as when she remarked that—

> Even on this plane of ours there are other and various intellects, besides those of man, in creatures visible and invisible, from minds of subjective high and low Beings to objective animals and the lowest organisms, in short, "from the Deva to the elephant, from the elemental to the ant." Now, in relation to its own plane of conception and perception, the ant has as good an intellect as we have ourselves, and a better one; for though it cannot express it in words, yet, over and above instinct, the ant shows very high reasoning powers, as all of us know. Thus, finding on our own plane—if we credit the teachings of Occultism—so many and such varied states of consciousness and intelligence, we have no right to take into consideration and account only our own human consciousness, as though no other existed outside of it. And if we cannot presume to decide how far insect consciousness goes, how can we limit consciousness, of which science knows nothing, to this plane?

For previous mention of von Frisch's work, and other suggestions on the mysterious knowledge of bees, the reader may refer to THEOSOPHY XIX, 527; XXVIII, 422; IX, 316; XXV, 509, 527; XXVI, 364; *The Ocean of Theosophy,* pp. 87 and 133; and *The Secret Doctrine,* II, 133.

"BIBLICAL BRICKS"

The Villager, of Greenwich Village, New York, featured a new kind of "Bible story" in a column by N. S. Olds (July 7). An engineer employed in a metal-working plant was attempting to cut the cost and time required to produce the clay crucibles in which the molten metal was handled. All efforts failed until, Mr. Olds reports, someone remembered the adage, "You can't make bricks without straw." The *Villager* account continues:

> He quoted it, and everybody recollected hearing it, but no one knew what it meant. The engineer [E. G. Acheson] sent for a Bible, and read the chapter in Exodus. There it was, in plain print. The higher critics had revised the text, but they hadn't changed a word about brick making. Moses was no fool, the engineer figured, and Pharaoh must have known his stuff. And the Egyptians were big builders, yet they couldn't make bricks without straw. There must be something in it, the engineer decided, and he went to it to find out. For 300 centuries the saying had been passed back and forth, and now, for the first time, the world was going to find out the facts.

Straw Liquor

Proceeding by trial and error, the chemists finally produced results by boiling down the straw, and obtaining a dark red liquor which, mixed with the brick clay, produced the results they had hoped for:

> The mixture, they found, made the clay more plastic and more tenacious of form. This meant that it would stand more moulding and handling, and take unusual shapes. But more to the good, the straw liquor speeded up the aging of the clay. The old saying in the pottery business was that it took two generations to prepare clay. One mixed it, the next used it. With the use of the straw clay, the aging requires only 10 days. This all means lowering of costs, and it applies to all forms of pottery making.

Who knows what other "mantrams"—casually passed on and unthought-over—are holding in trust, so to speak, some ancient knowledge, perhaps until reminiscence of a former skill awakens in Egos returning to incarnation for the building of a new civilization?

The Balance of Nature

The British Government has initiated a biological service, which (among other functions) will supervise nature reserves and organize their control. This move has brought into prominence the problems associated with the balance of life in both natural surroundings like moorlands or dunes, and semi-artificial ones such as woodlands. If Humanity be "the child of cyclic destiny," as H. P. Blavatsky declared, and not one of its units is able to "escape its conscious mission, or get rid of the burden of its co-operative work with nature" (*S.D.* II, 446), it is of the highest importance that the complexity of the relationship between the physical environment, and the plants and animals which it supports, as well as the delicate adjustment necessary for an appropriate balance, should be realized. Sir Edward Salisbury, FRS, writing on this subject in the London *Times* (Dec. 28, 1948), mentions that under completely wild conditions—

> plant and animal life develops in association with a particular combination of situation, soil, and climatic conditions and reaches a certain equilibrium. So long as these conditions are maintained the equilibrium—though it does in fact fluctuate with the changing seasons and with the rhythm that wild life itself may show—is relatively stable when considered over a long period.

In England, small preservation areas and the influence of man make it difficult to ensure any degree of general stability unless preservation is actively pursued.

CONSERVATION OF WILD LIFE

Sir Edward Salisbury reminds us that one of the greatest difficulties facing any conservation is "how to maintain a balance with the minimum of interference":

> Only those who have had direct acquaintance with communities of plants and animals over a period of years can appreciate the complexity of their relation and the subtlety of the physical causes that may bring about profound changes in the living constituents.

He quotes two examples, both of them related to human interference in World War I, and one especially to human habits:

> Before the first world war an extensive area of the Chesapeake region, in the United States, was famous for its flocks of ducks and wild geese. Suddenly the submerged water plants, upon which these birds depended for their food, disappeared and with these the birds themselves.

Investigations showed a slight increase in the salinity of the water. This was in itself advantageous to the food plants of the ducks and geese. Unfortunately, it was even more useful to a certain hydroid which came with the saline waters. The hydroid increased in myriads, smothered the plants, and the consequent turbidity of the water and other changes destroyed the usefulness of the areas for growing food for the birds. Another example is that of the rosebay willow herb in England. A century ago, records show this herb as widespread but growing in small numbers only here and there:

> With the felling of the woods that took place during the first world war, areas of one type suitable for its growth were provided, while the more frequent burning of the vegetation on our heaths, which accompanied the advent of the motor-car, and the greater prevalence of cigarette smoking among both men and women, created numerous areas of a second type, also suitable for colonization by the rose-bay willowherb—as its American name of fire-weed testifies.

A plant that was once rare has become a menace, impoverishing "the flora of many heaths formerly characterized by the variety of their vegetation and of the insect life which subsisted upon it."

MAN AND NATURE

The Law of Adjustment has endless applications in the worlds of manifestation:

> Harmony in the physical and mathematical world of sense, is *justice* in the spiritual one. Justice produces harmony, and injustice discord; and discord, on a cosmical scale, means chaos—annihilation (*Isis Unveiled,* I, 330).

In this present stage of evolution, Man has an aptitude for producing discords, and often his treatment of nature is no exception. Sir Edward Salisbury, in a reference to herbicides and insecticides, urges the necessity, in measures for the elimination of even the most noxious species, of due regard being paid to the effect on other organisms. "Indiscriminate use of D.D.T.," he writes, "to destroy red spider, at first apparently attended with spectacular success, has sometimes been followed by disaster, because of the simultaneous destruction of the predators and parasites that are natural controllers." But the disruption of the balance of nature has other than merely physical causes. Man has his own part to play in the collective aggregate of intelligences which "forms the manifested *verbum* of the unmanifested Logos," to use H. P. Blavatsky's expressive phrase. That action has reference to the invisible region which surrounds our globe—the *Sidereal Light* of Paracelsus. This is the great terrestrial crucible, giving out what it has received. When the forces in this region, the currents in the astral light—

> take place in harmony with the divine spirit, our earth and everything pertaining to it enjoys a fertile period. The occult powers of plants, animals, and minerals magically sympathize with the "superior natures," and the divine soul of man is in perfect intelligence with these "inferior" ones (*Isis Unveiled,* I, 247 and *S.D.* II, 74).

So great is Man's responsibility and opportunity as a co-worker with Nature.

THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

DECLARATION

The policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable basis for union among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "similarity of aim, purpose and teaching," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that basis. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect; yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signatures will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with. Write to:

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